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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [AM](#) [AJ](#)
SUBJECT: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER URGES US STATEMENT
AFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR AZERBAIJAN'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY,
INCLUDING N-K

REF: A. BAKU 494
[1](#)B. BAKU 486

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse per 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In an April 24 conversation with the Ambassador, Deputy Foreign Minister Azimov repeated the GOAJ's request for a "very clear indication that the US recognizes Nagorno-Karabakh as part of the Republic of Azerbaijan." Azimov argued that such a statement reflects long-standing US policy; allowing any ambiguity to creep into the US position would harm both Azerbaijan and the US. Azimov said that the Armenians are "abusing the situation," creating the impression that the US and Armenia had struck a deal on the Human Rights Report language, an impression that undercuts the principles of the US as an honest broker in the NK conflict. While it was easy to criticize the Russians for promoting views that undercut Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, Azimov said it was "painful" when similar statements questioning Azerbaijan's territorial integrity come from the US. Azimov underscored that he values the strategic partnership with the US which "tomorrow will lead us to new horizons of interaction," but it cannot develop "if we leave loopholes of ambiguity or uncertainty on key parts of our relations." Azimov's comments made it clear that the GOAJ continues to view the NK revisions to the 2006 Armenia Human Rights Report as a serious blow to the bilateral relationship. As reported ref a, immediate, decisive action is required to stem the damage; septel offers our recommendations. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov told the Ambassador on April 24 that Azerbaijani Ambassador Yashar Aliyev had discussed in depth with USG Minsk Group co-chair DAS Bryza on April 23 the GOAJ's request for a "very clear indication that the US recognizes NK as part of the Republic of Azerbaijan." Azimov underscored that this has "always been understood between the US and Azerbaijan, and is not a subject for compromise language." He emphasized that in so stating, the USG is not undertaking any new obligations, but simply clearly reaffirming long-standing US policy. Moreover, it reflects the "norms and principles of international law" which should prevail on this point. For these reasons, this statement should not raise concerns in other quarters, but would be highly appreciated by Azerbaijan.

[1](#)3. (C) Azimov said that the GOAJ has always understood from DAS Bryza, as Minsk group co-chair, that the US shared the

view that "the model for a settlement would be within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan," and that the US "would not drive towards NK's secession and opposes independence." Allowing any ambiguity to creep into that clear position would harm both Azerbaijan and the US. The US, he repeated, should not fear harming its position elsewhere in making this statement.

¶14. (C) Azimov pointed to "how the Armenians are abusing the situation," citing stories in the press and on the internet, from ANCA, and from Armenian "public opinion leaders." Armenian FonMin Vartan Oskanian had made a "strange statement as well." Azimov quoted Oskanian as saying publicly that "the State Department kept its word, and I kept mine." Azimov said that this makes him wonder what kind of agreement was struck between the US and Armenia. Oskanian, he said, clearly wanted to indicate that the US and Armenia "had a deal, and Oskanian was keeping his word and paying back." This undercuts the principle of the US as an honest broker -- "an honest broker would not enter into such deals." The US must make principled statements, as an honest broker, and in that context, stating that NK is part of Azerbaijani territory helps the US to be an honest broker. This may be a painful message to take to the Armenians, but the Armenians should know that the US is principled in its role as mediator, Azimov said.

¶15. (C) Azimov said that Russian NTV today reported that Armenians are burning Turkish flags on the streets of Yerevan, empowered by a "strong feeling of impunity that the US and Russia support them." Russian TV also carried reports "abusing and insulting Azerbaijani territorial history, including the Armenian position making territorial claims on Nakhchivan and NK as historical lands of Armenia. Azerbaijan

will not tolerate such statements as a matter of principle, he said.

¶16. (C) Azimov concluded that he would call in the Russian Ambassador to protest the broadcasts, and that it would be "easy" to deliver a strong message of protest to the Russians. It is "painful" when similar statements questioning Azerbaijan's territorial integrity come from the US. "I value that partnership. Tomorrow our strategic partnership will lead us to new horizons of interaction, but not if we leave loopholes of ambiguity or uncertainty on key parts of our relations," Azimov said. Azimov added that he is under pressure from public opinion which is questioning engagement with the US when the US does not recognize one of Azerbaijan's most fundamental causes. In the interest of the partnership we need to take this next step, Azimov concluded.

¶17. (C) Comment: Azimov's comments underscore again that the GOAJ continues to view the revisions to the language on NK in the 2006 Armenia Human Rights Report as a serious blow to the bilateral relationship. Other reaction -- including escalating criticism of the US in the media -- will be reported septel along with our recommendations on steps we need to take now to stem the damage.
DERSE